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SUBJECT: UNIFICATION OF KRG JUSTICE MINISTRY

This is a Regional Reconstruction Team Erbil cable.

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) authorities attended formal ceremonies to mark the long-awaited unification of the PUK and KDP Ministries of Justice 6 February 2007. The separate PUK and KDP ministries of Finance, Interior, and Peshmerga continue working on resolution of outstanding organizational structure, budgeting, and control issues. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani (KDP), Deputy Prime Minister Omar Fatah (PUK), Deputy Speaker of the KNA Kamal Kirkuki (KDP), and other notables attended a ceremony at the Ministry of Justice building in Erbil to mark the unification of the two KRG ministries of Justice. The ministries of Finance, Interior, and Peshmerga (regional defense) are still under the separate control of the KDP in the provinces of Erbil and Dohuk and the PUK in the province of Sulaimaniyah, a legacy of the separate PUK and KDP regimes until 2006.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The now-former KDP Minister of Justice, Azad Mullah Effendi, will retain the rank of minister of region (often internally termed minister of state,). The PUK Minister of Justice Faruq Makki will direct the newly combined KRG Ministry of Justice.

[1](#)4. (SBU) KRG PM Nechirvan Barzani, in his speech on this occasion, said the KRG should use the opportunity of the ministry,s unification to review all laws and procedures. He asked for foreign advisors to assist this process and said the entire judicial system should be re-evaluated. Stressing the importance of justice in democratic life, he called for a new focus on the rule of law.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Comment: Each of the remaining divided ministries -- Finance, Interior, and Peshmerga ) presents a different fundamental challenge to the evolving KRG political system. Trust between the PUK and KDP is still tentative at the level of ministers and directors general in the ministries touching on security, because most of these office holders were actively involved in the military confrontations between the two parties in the 1990s. Integrating financial oversight would provide transparency between the party apparatuses even if not to Baghdad, and this is also a highly sensitive point within the KRG. It is probable that unification of these remaining ministries, especially those handling security, will be delayed because of the two parties, unwillingness to relinquish party control of armaments and troops. End Comment.  
KHALILZAD